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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to increase the involvement of parents in the music education of fourth and fifth grade students. A delivery system was developed to provide parents with activities, resources, and materials relating to the student's music education. Parents received the materials at no cost. The author developed a brochure and monthly newsletter; recorded an audio cassette and video cassette to encourage musical activity in the family; administered a postsurvey to all participants; and prepared a handbook of musical resources for the child and parent. Analysis of the data revealed that the participants were more apt to involve themselves in their child's musical experiences when given information and materials. All parents involved in the project rated the project as beneficial to their children and conveyed the belief that parental involvement in a child's music education is important. (Author)

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Increasing the Involvement of Parents in the Music Education of Fourth and Fifth Grade Students Through Improved Communication

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Valerie Cowart

Cluster XXVIII

A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Leslie N. Carter
Mr. Leslie N. Carter

Principal
Title

Merrimack, New Hampshire
Address

February 17, 1992
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Valerie Edith Cowart under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

April 6, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

June L. Delano
June Delano, Ph.D.,
Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the Involvement of Parents in the Music Education of Fourth and Fifth Grade Students Through Improved Communication. Cowart, Valerie E., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Parental Involvement/Music Education/Elementary Education

This practicum was designed to increase the involvement of parents in the music education of fourth and fifth grade students. A delivery system was developed to provide parents with activities, resources, and materials relating to the student's music education. Parents received the materials at no cost.

The writer developed a brochure and monthly newsletter; recorded an audio cassette and video cassette to encourage musical activity in the family; administered a postsurvey to all participants; and prepared a handbook of musical resources for the child and parent.

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants were more apt to involve themselves in their child's musical experience when given information and materials. All parents involved in the project rated the project as beneficial to their children and conveyed the belief that parental involvement in a child's music education is important.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description Of Community

The setting of this practicum was a suburban elementary school which serves approximately 700 students. Services include: two readiness classes, five first grade classes, six second grade classes, five third grade classes, five fourth grade classes, five fifth grade classes, three learning disability resource classes, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a guidance counselor, a reading specialist, a gifted and talented program director, a learning resource specialist, a part-time school psychologist, an art teacher, a part-time art teacher, a music teacher, a part-time music teacher, a part-time computer teacher, and a nurse. Administration consists of a principal, and an assistant principal. Two secretaries complete the staff.

The elementary school in which this practicum was implemented is located in a middle class bedroom community. The community has a large percentage of professionals who work in the technological industries. The school belongs to a district which consists of three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Two of the elementary schools are of identical size and the third is smaller with approximately 500 students. The community actively supports the town's

athletic events such as Little League and basketball. Skiing is also a favored sport.

The three elementary schools have well organized volunteer programs. Volunteers in each school compete for state recognition which is gained through points awarded for hours served. All classroom teachers and specialists have access to a volunteer who assists the teacher for the school year. Volunteers are placed by results on an interest survey and schedule considerations.

Another characteristic of this location is the town meeting. Many school issues and concerns are discussed at such meetings. Overcrowding at the elementary level has been a primary topic at the meetings for the past several years. The need for a new elementary school has been adequately documented, but many townspeople voted against the issue, as they feared the probable increase in property taxes.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's role in this setting is that of a music teacher. A part-time music teacher assists the writer in order to comply with state requirements for teacher/student ratio. This person teaches four classes one day per week.

The writer's responsibilities include preparation for and the teaching of 27 classes weekly. In addition, the writer conducts four performance ensembles: Fourth Grade Glee Club, Fifth Grade Glee Club, Girls' Vocal Ensemble and Boys' Orff

Ensemble which meet weekly for one half hour. These performance ensembles are comprised of fourth and fifth graders who pass a simple audition. The groups perform twice yearly in addition to being featured in the holiday concert of a local symphony. The Glee Club has approximately 90 students who study two-part choral literature. The Girls' Vocal Ensemble concentrates on treble music, usually for two parts and that which is sung without accompaniment. The Boys' Orff Ensemble develops mallet technique, rhythmic and melodic improvisational skills on the xylophones, metallophones, and other percussion instruments of the Orff Instrumentarium.

Other responsibilities include preparation for a holiday concert, spring concert, and two talent shows. The concerts are performed twice for students and once in the evening for family and members of the community. In addition, the writer participates in a duty schedule and behavioral management program for special needs students. The schedule for duty includes all classroom teachers, administration, and specialists who supervise early morning bus arrival, playground supervision, lunchroom supervision, and afternoon bus dismissal. Each duty is approximately thirty minutes in length. The behavioral management programs and the educational evaluations for some coded students are shared with specialists with the aim of increasing awareness and expectations of these students' needs.

The music program is "on wheels" for five months of the schoo' year and then exchanges with the art program for a room

for four months. The writer is continually challenged in time and energy consuming ways to maintain a music program of the highest quality despite the inconvenience of not having a music room.

The writer's qualifications for music specialist include the following degrees: Bachelor of Music in voice, Wesleyan College; Master of Music Education, Florida State University; and Educational Specialist in curriculum and instruction, University of Kentucky. Certification is held in specific learning disabilities, music K-12, and elementary education. The writer has advanced training and certificates in Orff and Kodaly methodology. Membership is held in the Conductor's Guild, American Educational Research Association, the Dalcroze Society, American Orff Association, Mu Phi Epsilon, and the Music Educators National Conference.

For the past eight years, the writer has been employed by public schools as a music specialist. She has maintained additional employment as children's choir director and soloist for several churches and synagogues. A private studio for voice and piano instruction has been maintained for eleven years. These experiences have, in the writer's opinion, provided her with a wide variety of work settings and populations which necessitated open and often innovative communication strategies for encouraging involvement of parents.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

A study of the problem identified revealed the fact that there was no established program for parental involvement through the school in their child's music education. Consequently, the student and parent were not provided with activities for sharing the music experience together at home which relate to the school's musical goals.

Therefore, parental involvement in their child's school music education was either minimal or nonexistent and thus the student missed the added benefit of family musical activities aimed at providing a comprehensive musical education. When the problem was alleviated, all fourth and fifth grade students' parents were given assistance and encouragement in becoming involved in their child's music education. Activities were created that enabled the parent to share in their child's music curriculum, and to provide parents with the necessary information, knowledge, and strategies for participation.

The fourth and fifth grade student receives one 40 minute music lesson per week in the practicum setting. This time is reduced by approximately ten minutes due to the program being "on wheels." Approximately 100 students participate in musical experiences such as Glee Club or

ensembles, giving up a lunch recess once a week to do so. A small number of students receive private music instruction and approximately 25 fourth graders are involved in the after school instrumental music program once a week. In the writer's opinion, their schedule does not provide enough contact time with the myriad of musical experience needed at the fourth and fifth grade levels. Other than invitations to concerts at school, parents were not provided with suggestions, activities, or ideas for involvement in their child's music education by the school.

The problem was minimal involvement of parents in the music education of fourth and fifth grade students.

Problem Documentation

The local problem was proven to exist through observations, parent/teacher conference interactions, and an informal verbal survey. Further documentation was offered by the fact that there was no established procedure or program in force to involve parents in the music education of their child, in contrast to the district's program for the 1990-1991 school year created to involve parents in the reading experiences of their child.

An informal verbal survey was conducted by the writer at Open House. She asked 103 parents if they would like to know more about the music program and 103 responded affirmatively.

Many parents asked the writer for suggestions concerning the enrichment activities that they might offer their child. Some parents were unaware that their child had music class once a week and many parents expressed curiosity in the curriculum content.

During the previous school year the writer invited the students in the fourth grade classes to offer the invitation to participate in the recorder and music appreciation units. The writer did not send home any written material with instructions concerning how the parent might become involved in the units. Zero parents participated in the units.

Problem documentation was also derived from the attendance by parents at a local symphony concert in which fourth and fifth grade students were featured. Approximately one third of the parents of the students attended according to ticket sales for the event.

The writer was aware of four parents who were actively involved in their child's music education during the previous school year. These four parents contacted the writer with suggestions and reports about certain musical activities in which they were engaged with their child.

Causative Analysis

An analysis of the problem brought forth the primary cause of there being no established delivery system for communication of opportunities and activities offered to parents. There was

minimal communication between music specialist, student, and parent. The writer believed that the responsibility for creating such a delivery system was that of the music specialist. The four years of employment in the practicum's setting was spent largely on the writer's attempts to remediate problems such as a lack of appropriate materials with which to teach such as outdated books, an inadequate piano, and no readily available sequential material that could be used in connection with the curriculum. The first two years of employment were spent on the remediation of these problems with the help of an interested principal who actively supports the development of a superior music program. With the above stated problems taken care of, the writer devoted the next year of employment to the implementation of a practicum which focused on organizing communication between herself and the classroom teachers in an effort to better serve the school population as a whole.

As in music, timing is often everything, and the writer felt that the second half of this school year was an appropriate time to begin an attempt to involve parents in the music education of their child. The 1990-1991 school year in this practicum's school district was designated as the year to increase parental involvement in reading. A host of activities were initiated that readied the parents' mindset toward such attempts at involvement.

Another cause of the problem was one which is seen in most large suburban school music programs: namely, that of too many students and not enough contact time with those students. The writer decided to concentrate on the population of fourth and fifth graders because she estimated 250 students to be a workable number with which to begin a program for parental involvement. Also, the writer realized that fourth graders who were prepared to involve their parents would probably continue this effort into the fifth grade. Because fifth grade students take required music classes for the last time during their public school education, the fifth grade year is the last year in which such an effort is probably apt to be made.

In brief, the causes of the problem were no established delivery system for communication of opportunities and activities offered to parents to enrich the musical growth of their child and that of there being minimal communication between music specialist, student and parent.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The literature reviewed supported the idea that parents have the most lasting and powerful influence on a child's self-image, attitudes, and values concerning learning (Honig, 1985; McLaughlin, 1988; & Merrimack School Board, 1990). The recent demand for educational reform brings with it a need for parental involvement. Research clearly shows that there is, indeed, a definite lack of parental involvement in the American education

process (Bradley, 1988; Lamm, 1986). This perceived apathy on the part of parents frequently results in low student achievement, increased absenteeism, and a general, overall lack of academic success (Bauch, 1990).

Despite the negative results caused by a lack of parental involvement in the student's education, many positive results may obliterate the previous negative results provided parental involvement is begun, regardless of how late it may be started (Epstein, 1987). The power of parental involvement appears to be an international as well as a national phenomenon as witnessed by the tremendous emphasis that many Asian families, especially those from Japan, place on the education of their children, and the corresponding numbers of Asian students excelling in the American school system. Further proof of this connection comes from a study of four infant schools in outer London which showed significantly more academic progress in groups with parental involvement (Dye, 1989). Just as nationality does not appear to be a factor in these studies, neither does the race of the participants. In studies done with Afro-american children of both high and low academic achievement, the results were very similar in families where the children were given academic support and encouragement, those children became much higher scholastic achievers than those from families where support was lacking or nonexistent (Henderson, 1987).

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Perhaps the strongest evidence for the connection between academic excellence and parental involvement comes from the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). In 1981, this organization published an annotated bibliography describing 35 studies on the subject. The findings in all the studies of the NCCE pointed to one conclusion: parental involvement in almost any form appears to produce measurable gains in student achievement. Some of the specific results of greater parent participation in a child's academic experience were: (a) higher grade and test scores; (b) long-term academic achievement; (c) positive attitude and behavior; (d) more successful programs within the schools; and (e) more effective schools. Evidence suggests that these are not just short-term benefits, but that the results can continue years after the child has left the parentally involved learning environment (Henderson, 1987).

Another advantage of parents becoming more involved in their child's education is that the parents as well as the children receive tangible rewards. As the child becomes more proficient academically, the parents gain pride and self-confidence from the child's intellectual and emotional growth; this in turn provides parents with motivation to invest further time in the child's development (Cone, Delawyer & Wolfe, 1985; Lillie, 1975).

Becker and Epstein (1983) conducted a formal survey of 3,700 first, third, and fifth grade teachers in 600 elementary schools

and deduced five groupings of the 14 parent involvement techniques examined. Those groupings are: (a) reading and books; (b) discussion; (c) informal learning activities at home; (d) contracts; (e) helping parents teach. They also reported the following:

> Approximately fifty percent of the teachers had serious doubts about the success of practical efforts to involve parents in learning activities at home. Teachers have not been educated in the management of parental involvement; the teachers' and parents' time is finite; the teachers and parents have different skills and often diverse goals for the children. Nevertheless, some teachers have developed procedures that enable them to select and manage parental involvement programs. (p. 87)

To be sure, research has shown that with increased parent participation, student achievement will correspondingly increase, irrespective of race, nationality, or economic status. The challenge then, is how to motivate parents to become involved in the education of their children. As one educator (Davis, 1989) commented, "Time crunches, gridlocks, call-waiting, fax avalanches, and power lunches are taking their toll. Cottage industries have sprung up like a crabgrass blitzkrieg to meet the needs of harried parents. The good old days of expecting parents to be involved because it's right and the American Way won't last much longer. New approaches are

needed" (p. 21). This sentiment of being concerned with the needs, problems, and scheduling of modern parents when designing a parent-involvement program is echoed by other educators as well (Landerholm & Karr, 1988).

The writer believes that teachers benefit from parental involvement efforts because they, quite simply, are presented with more time with which to plan, create, and produce materials, and develop innovative approaches to curricula matters. Because the parent is involved, the teacher must plan for that parent's activities in the classroom and, as a result, the child often receives more personal attention. Most children feel special when they are given one-on-one instruction or attention from a teacher or parent. This involvement could produce a boost to self esteem and motivation for the child.

Brandt (1989) reports that research from a ten year study at John Hopkins University concluded that teachers' respect appreciation for the family is increased as a result of including parents in their child's learning experiences. Parental outcomes included more interaction with the child as student at home and thus increased support and encouragement for the child. Student outcomes demonstrated that the child's self concept of ability as learner is increased.

Henderson (1987) simply states that, "When parents are involved, children do better in school, and they go to better schools" (p. 149). The following excerpts (Lehman, 1989),

highlighted the importance of communicating the value of the arts in education:

> The problem is (that) basic arts education does not exist in the United States today. The arts are in triple jeopardy: They are not viewed as serious; knowledge itself is not viewed as a prime educational objective; and those who determine school curricula do not agree on what arts education is.
>
> The single greatest drawback of existing arts curricula and the guides which teachers use is their emphasis on skill development at the expense of the art form as a whole. (p. 13)

Amundson (1988) concluded from the research from school boards about the importance of parental involvement that school districts cannot afford to overlook this great resource and that the greatest benefits resulted from parental involvement programs that included direct learning activities and experiences with their children.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

In response to the problem identified in this practicum, a program for increasing parent involvement in the music education of fourth and fifth grade students was implemented. Participation of the parents, students, and administration resulted in involvement in a schedule of activities designed to involve the parent in the child's music education.

Statement of General Goals

There were two general goals for this practicum. The first goal was to establish an effective delivery system for informing parents about the music education of their fourth or fifth grade students. The second goal was to provide activities, resources, and materials for the parents that would enable them to become involved in their child's music education.

Behavioral Objectives

Behavioral objectives for this practicum included the following: (1) 50% of the approximately 250 pairs of parents will participate in 100% of the activities, and (2) 50% of the parents returning survey will evaluate activities as helpful in enabling them to become involved in their child's music education.

Evaluation Instruments

The writer evaluated the fulfillment of the objectives by means of a checklist for attendance and/or participation for each parent of a 4th or 5th grade child. In addition, the writer created and administered an open-ended survey which was sent to each parent at the end of implementation.

The checklist (see Appendix A) to record participation of parents was directly related to the first goal of establishing an effective delivery system for informing parents about the music education of their child. Students were given several items concerning parental involvement to take home. The writer asked the student the following music class if the parent had indeed been given the item. If the child said, "No," a second copy was given. Seldom did the second copy not reach home.

The writer created the parental involvement survey (see Appendix B) because no other instrument for measuring the specific items for the specific population was found in a search of the literature. The survey was distributed via U.S. mail and included a self-addressed stamped envelope. Ten statements pertaining to the practicum were posed. Six statements asked for a yes or no response, three items were open ended sentences to be completed and one was a multiple choice question.

The results collected (for the yes or no responses) were tabulated and listed. The multiple choice question's

responses were also tabulated and listed . A sample from the open ended sentence responses was presented (see Appendix A).

The items measured in the survey included interest in the further development of the practicum at the primary grades, interest in participating in future developments of the project, and perceived benefits from the project. Problems, modifications, and unexpected events were considered in the interpretation of findings.

Samples from the comment section of the survey availed information concerning areas of needed change or improvement and ideas for future planning at all grade levels. It is the writer's hope that the goals of this practicum will be adopted by the other two elementary schools in the writer's school district due to the success of this practicum.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

The lack of parental involvement in the music education of fourth and fifth grade students was the problem which this problem addressed.

The writer's search of the literature revealed an emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in the child's education. Many articles focused on how parental involvement could increase parenting skills (Schaefer, 1972; Yanok & Derubertis, 1989; Turnbull, 1983; and Rasinski & Frederick, 1989). This portion of the literature agreed with the idea that parental involvement helps to create a positive learning environment at home and encouragement at home and encourages positive attitudes toward education (Wilcox, 1988; Gamble, 1988).

The process of getting parents involved in their child's education is much discussed in the literature. Several solution strategies were offered.

Discussion and Evaluation of Strategies

Walberg (1984) stated that contracts often serve as a meaningful connector among parent, child, and school. The Merrimack, New Hampshire School Board (1990) devised a contract in which separate pledges were made by parent and student to promote reading in the home. This idea was one that easily

transferred the challenge of promoting parental involvement in the child's music education.

Another element of a successful parental involvement project is that of the parent volunteer. The physical education teacher in the writer's work setting designates one day per week as parent volunteer day and rotates interested parents as volunteers who participate in the physical education lessons. Another teacher in the district, a music specialist, has solicited help from the parent-teacher group most successfully as evidenced by their coordinating an annual talent show. Refreshments are sold and the proceeds benefit the music budget. The writer believes that her desire for an exemplary music program is supported by the parent-teacher group as evidenced by their purchase of a sound system this school year for the music program. She plans to request partial funding for the continuation of this practicum's goals from the parent-teacher group. The funds would be applied toward copying, postage costs, and materials.

Several specific solution strategies were cited in literature and most focused on increasing parental involvement in the academic areas of the curriculum such as reading and mathematics. Specific solution strategies for increasing parental involvement in the fourth and fifth grade student's music education were not found by this writer. However, the

solution strategies found in the literature all appeared to agree that there is no one best way to go about creating a program for parental involvement. Instead, it was deemed best to create a way in which parents may become involved in a variety of ways, depending on the specifics of any given situation, and that the program is designed to be long-lasting and comprehensive (Gordon, 1979, Gordon & Breivogel, 1976). A study by Henderson (1987) pointed to the following conclusions about programs for parental involvement:

1. The family provides the primary educational environment.

2. Involving parents in their children's formal education improves student achievement.

3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive and well-planned.

4. The benefits are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level; there are strong effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school.

5. Involving parents in their own education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community parents must be involved at all levels in the school.

6. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help.

7. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; we must see how they

interconnect with each other and with the world at large. (p. 9-10)

Research indicated that there are certain principles generally recognized as important parts of any created process of promoting parental involvement (Henderson, 1987). The school environment should be a pleasant one and one in which the parent should be made to feel welcome and comfortable. The parent-teacher connection is strengthened by mutual respect and administrative involvement and support. The communication between parent and school should be systematic and regularly scheduled, and opportunities for response to school communication should be encouraged. If parents feel their input is genuinely valued, then they are more likely to remain involved in their child's education through the school and at home.

An appropriate choice of activities is suggested to be an important facet in promoting parental involvement. The National Governors' Association (NGA) Task Force on Parent Involvement and Choice suggests that parents should be motivated to become more involved in their child's education through a wide choice of activities in which to participate. Walberg, in a 1984 study, sees constructive roles for parents in several areas of scholastic activities. These areas should easily be adapted to the realm of music education. Some of the areas suggested are:

1. Audience for a child's work: (allowing the child to share homework, acting as constructive critic while helping the child to memorize, and being a 'listening ear' to such activities as signing or practicing an instrument).

2. Home tutor: (For either the parent's own child or one or more of the child's classmates).

3. Co-learner: (the parent actually learns the same information or skill as the child, such as a foreign language or a musical instrument).

4. Supporter of school programs: (The parents involve themselves in one or more of the school programs in which their child is enrolled and explain to the child the importance of that program).

5. Advocate before school boards and other officials: (If parents become involved with their children's curriculum and see the importance of certain studies such as music, they can defend these courses to school boards and other administration bodies if the studies are threatened with termination through budget cuts or other streamlining measures). (p. 398)

Andress (1987) suggested that in any project of parental involvement, parents should be made aware of the expectations of the educational program and provided with ways to reinforce the students' growth, thereby increasing their own involvement in the child's education. One of the best ways to inform parents of the expectations of the educational program is

through personal contact. This can be accomplished through a personal phone call to the parent or a request sent through the child to the home for a meeting between the teacher and the parent. Once the parent is in contact with the teacher, the parent should receive a full explanation of what will be required of them in terms of time commitment, scheduling, advance preparation, and travel. Their commitment should be explained to them along with the emphasis that what the parent is being asked to do will play a vital part in the educational process of the child. The parent should also be assured that his or her services in this project, be they participation, advice, or written recommendations will be used as input by the teacher or administration in the analysis of the project; no participant should feel left out or that their input is without merit. The parents must feel appreciated for their input.

It is necessary for the parent to know the options available to them concerning their child's music education. The literature shows that this need is best met through a systematic delivery system for regular communication (Chavkin & Williams, 1987).

Parental involvement is crucial as Henderson (1987) eloquently states:

> It is central to our democracy that parents and citizens participate in the governing of public institutions. It is

> also destructive to the family to shut parents out of their children's experience in school. When large numbers of students are deliberately allowed to fall irrevocably behind and then to drop out all together, it is a clear signal that our institutions are not functioning properly. Parent involvement is not a quick-fix; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education. (p. 149)

Description of Selected Solutions

The writer believed that the preferred solution would best be gleaned from several components from the literature that would combine well to develop a custom-designed method by which students could share their musical experiences with their parents.

Preferred components include the following: monthly newsletter, parent-student handbook of musical activities, pamphlet describing curriculum and expectations, audio-cassette for musical home use, video on involving parent in child's music education on loan at school and town library, parent/student designed performances which share and demonstrate concepts, objectives, and skill.

The reason this solution strategy worked well is because the writer adjusted the implementation to fit the specific needs of the population. Some of the problem solving strategies gleaned from the literature offered ideas

for parental involvement in general, which were transposed to the musical realm. In addition, the practicum's goals lent support to the local school board's 1990-1991 objective of promoting the involvement of parents in their own child's education.

Report Of Action Taken

Activities and resource materials were provided for parents of fourth and fifth grade students. These activities and resources constituted the implementation of the practicum and continue to be implemented. The writer enjoys her ongoing program evaluation of the practicum implementation and the new ideas that evolve which enhance the efficacy of the project.

The writer embellished her original plans by creating additional resources, materials and activities for parent/student musical involvement (see Appendix C). The first music letter for January was supplemented by an introductory packet of information about the practicum for parents which included a welcome letter, a list of opportunities for family musical development, statements concerning the benefits of music in one's life, and suggested reading materials.

A booklet of the lyrics to five songs was developed in the hope of encouraging the students to teach the songs to their parents without traditional accompaniment. The students were familiar with the melody and rhythm of each song as they were taught them in music class. The five songs were voted on by the

students for inclusion in the booklet. Illustrations for each song were provided by students.

Views from prominent American citizens were distributed to parents via their child. Each statement emphasized the great importance of music in the child's education. Samples of opinions include those of the Chairman of AT&T and the CEO of Chevron U.S.A. Students from fourth and fifth grade classes made a mural listing reasons why they thought music was an important and necessary component of a complete education.

The handbook of musical activities represented the culmination of student contributions of enjoyable activities to do with their parents at home and a parent resource library which listed books available to the parent through the writer's personal library at school. Finally, a listing of music catalog addresses was included which offer a wide variety of musical products for purchase.

Students enjoyed choosing three-note songs for a recorder handbook. The goal of this activity was to provide student and parent with a soprano recorder, directions for playing a repertoire of simple and familiar tunes that could be played unison or in a round which would give the impression of two-part harmony. Several students added to their collection, progressing to more difficult recorder literature.

The writer's school district has a wide variety of musical listening offerings. The writer gleaned a listing of

those appropriate for the elementary student and arranged for the recordings to be taken home. Each selection was categorized (i.e., children's songs, classical, Civil War songs, etc.) for the students' and parents' convenience.

The monthly newsletter, entitled Music Notes, served as the core of the delivery system for giving information about practicum implementation events. Each newsletter dealt with different objectives of the music curriculum.

An audio cassette was recorded and duplicated for each student. The purpose of the cassette was to provide students with accompaniment to several school songs which they could sing at home or in the car. This element of the implementation was very popular as evidenced by students and parents comments. Students also voted on the songs to include in the booklet and provided illustration for each song. The songs included on the tape and in the booklet were "Old Folks At Home," "I've Been Working On The Railroad," "I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy," "Home On The Range," "America," "America, The Beautiful," and "The Star-Spangled Banner." The accompaniments played on the tape were original an all songs are in the public domain.

A survey was distributed to students and parents during the month of June asking them to write about their favorite songs and musical activities. The categories included:
(a) favorite classical composers, (b) favorite popular composers, (c) favorite orchestral compositions, (d) favorite school songs, (e) most favorite school song,

(f) musical games to play at home, (g) completion of "I Would like my Parents To...," and (h) a comparison page for parent and student to choose their musical favorites in several categories, such as movie theme, TV program, and singer.

In June, a parental involvement survey (see Apendix B) was mailed to each student's home along with a thank you letter for participating in the project, a self-addressed stamped envelope in which to return the survey, and a certificate of merit for participation.

Due to a lengthy illness, the writer's plans for the video had to be modified. Instead of producing one video aimed at presenting ideas for parental involvement, the writer developed three videos for student check-out. The first video was of the spring concert. Several copies were available for students to view at home as many parents videotaped the program. One final copy was formed from the editing of several versions. Parent volunteers assisted in this endeavor. The second video was entitled "A Musical Potpourri" which highlighted music classes, student interviews, and a message from the principal. This video was produced by fifth grade students using the school's state-of-the-art video equipment. The third video was a brief sample of music classes learning to play the recorder and preparing for the spring concert entitled "A Music Class Sampler."

The video entitled, "Music: You And Your Child" was professionally recorded and featured interviews with three musicians of varying degrees of professional involvement. Suggestions for parental involvement were highlighted along with the benefits of music education and the importance of keeping music education in the public school. An introduction to the Action Kit For Music was made and described. This kit is available for check-out with the writer's original video. The materials and videos in the kit are for public use: not copyrighted for home use only.

A brochure developed by the writer was distributed to all fourth and fifth grade students. Teachers in the writer's school were also given a copy along with a letter informing them of the practicum outline. The brochure highlighted songs to sing, classical listening selections for children, addresses for local performing groups, and suggestions for parents to teach their children songs that they themselves treasured as children.

In addition to the activities described above, the writer opened her classroom for parent visitation. Several parents visited and expressed an interest in attending activities that would be offered in the late afternoon or evenings. The writer has explored this possibility with the assistant principal as a professional growth objective for the next school year. The parents who visited the music classroom were engaged in

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activities that included singing, playing the recorder, folk-dancing, and playing Orff instruments.

The parent-teacher group produces a quarterly newsletter entitled, "School Scoop" and the writer featured several implementation activities during implementation. A proposal for partial funding of resource materials will be presented.

The writer was concerned about new music teachers who might become employed in the district and is in the process of creating a permanent file of all resource materials to be kept by the building principal.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general goal of the practicum was to increase parental involvement in the music education of the fourth and fifth grade student through improved communication. The results of the practicum are presented through a discussion of survey results, class checklists, and a section on unexpected events that took place during the implementation is included. All participants viewed the program as positive. Hopefully, the parents who participated will continue in their child's music education throughout high school and beyond formal schooling: for a lifetime.

Results

The goals of 1) establishing an effective delivery system for informing parents about the music education of their fourth or fifth grade student, and 2) providing activities, resources, and materials for the parents that would enable them to become involved in their child s music education were met. The results of this practicum were extremely positive. The goal of increasing parental involvement in the child's music education was fulfilled according to the writer's expectations.

A class checklist (see Appendix A) was kept for each fourth and fifth grade class. Approximately 275 students participated in the implementation. The purpose of the

checklist was to record the dissemination of information and materials to parents (see Appendix C). The behavioral objective of 50% of approximately 250 pairs of parents participating in 100% of the activities was accomplished. Approximately 100% of these parents received monthly newsletters, parent-student handbook of musical activities, pamphlet describing curriculum and expectations, and audio-cassette for home use. The writer also relied on written reminders, phone calls, and actual parent contact for the first goal of establishing an effective delivery system for informing parents about various components and goals of the music program. Telephone contact with the parent was perceived by the writer to be an especially effective way of encouraging reluctant parents to visit the music classroom. The sixth activity of checking out the video was less than 10%. The writer attributes this to the change in the component previously mentioned in Chapter IV. To compensate for this change the writer created several videos for home distribution. These videos were viewed by approximately 45% of the parents. Given these facts, the first objective of the practicum was more than sufficiently met. Approximately 200 individual students participated in either the talent show or spring concert. All participating students reported at least one parent's attendance at one event. At the spring concert, three parents participated in

most of the musical presentation, and all parents participated in the singing of a popular folk song. The writer was delighted when two parents volunteered to be section leaders for the audience so that the song could be sung in a three-part round. Given these facts, the first objective of the practicum was more than sufficiently met.

Behavioral objective number two stated that 50% of the parents returning survey will evaluate activities as helpful in enabling them to become involved in the child's music education. Ninety-three surveys were returned, and of those surveys 90% responded positively to the evaluation. Therefore, behavioral objective number two were met.

The survey results (see Appendix B) provided important data concerning the effectiveness of the implementation and an opportunity for parents to express themselves through comments about suggestions or ideas for future implementation strategies. The nature of the practicum was practical, and the implications point to the adage of society's perpetual need for both philosophers and plumbers: both are needed. One of the outstanding opportunities of the practicum process is that the writer can be both through effecting change in the work environment. The process of creating a concrete and systematic delivery system for informing parents about most everything concerned with the school's music education goals and opportunities for involvement provided the writer with much insight into the pleasure, power, and responsibility for

tailoring very specific solution strategies to the targeted population.

The writer has grown through this practicum process to understand that each school environment has different needs and resources, and that although the school district in which she works has only two other elementary schools, several changes would be necessary for effective implementation in those schools.

An important implication from the practicum that cannot be expressed in quantifiable data is that to a child, the parent is the most important audience. The children whose parents attended school functions could barely contain their delight. This surprised the writer somewhat, especially in relation to fifth grade boys, because she foresaw the possibility of some children being embarrassed by their parents' presence in the school. This was not the case in this practicum.

Another implication that cannot be placed on a table or chart (one would need an E.E.G. for measuring alpha, beta, and theta brain wave patterns) is the apparent joy the parents experienced when involved in the music making process. For those parents who had never played a xylophone, drum, or recorder the experience was positively pleasant and fun. The writer did not see one frown on one parent's face while they were actively engaged in the music making process.

Unexpected Events

Of the many unexpected events that occurred during the implementation perhaps the most unexpected was the involvement of a parent whose child is in college, but considers himself a patron of the arts. This gentleman made possible a radio appearance of fourth and fifth grade students, funding of copy paper products, copying expense, and refreshments for participants at several events. The students and parents benefited from his involvement which began when a parent mentioned some of the implementation needs to him.

Another unexpected outcome of the practicum was the increase in parent volunteers in the music program. These volunteers became aware of practicum goals as they typed, copied, and helped to distribute the vast number of take home resources. A suggestion was made for an after school workshop for parents interested in being a music volunteer.

The writer included the conductor a local symphony in the video and he extended an invitation to students at the writer's school to a children s concert. Also, the possibility of the students performing with the symphony was discussed.

As parents became more aware of the possibilities for involvement in their child's music education, the writer was contacted many times concerning recommendations for private lessons. An increase in the number of students in the two

annual talent shows almost doubled. The talent show was an outstanding venue for one-on-one contact with the parent. Several parents requested appointments with the writer to discuss their child's musical development and/or rehearsal for the talent show under the writer's direction.

Another unexpected event was the sharp increase of parent phone calls to the writer asking what the student might do to achieve more in music class (i.e. raise his or her music grade). Many of these questions were answered with the component of the implementation that described the curriculum and expectations of the music program.

Conclusions

The writer firmly believes that the objectives of the practicum were met and even exceeded her original predictions for success. She interprets the responses to her attempts at increasing parental involvement in their child's music education as effective and well received.

The two major implications of the practicum are that parents are more likely to become involved with their child s music education if they are given the instructions and materials with which to do so, and that the music teacher must know how to encourage, involve, and promote parental involvement by creating the appropriate materials and opportunities and a convenient venue for experiencing those materials and opportunities.

Parents respond positively when there is a systematic delivery system for regular communication and come to expect the information and, hopefully, incorporate it into their life and that of their child. Teachers and parents should share the responsibility for the education of the child and as music, in particular, is often experienced in the social setting and the fact that this setting is most often found in the home and community, the parent needs to be encouraged to engage the child in the socialization processes of music. Of course, music is often greatly enjoyed alone, but the experience of music is a complex one and often depends upon the interplay of the music situation and persons. Parents are the one to provide musical access for their child outside of the music classroom.

What one does as a child is often continued into adulthood and attitude is a powerful variable in the decision making process of what one chooses to do. The writer believes that parental involvement in the child's music education in most any form will produce beneficial gains in the child's musical achievement.

The bottom line remains that the child is more likely to continue in the structured music program at the middle and high school levels if the elementary music experience is a positive one, both in school and at home. The efforts at parental involvement must begin early if they are to reap the greatest benefits for the child. Parental involvement is the key.

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Even though the writer met the goals of the practicum, she believes that this program should be instituted at the district level to help insure its continuance if she were to move to another teaching position. Through continued involvement by the writer with key parents, the program will improve and be refined. The writer is extremely proud to have begun such a program for parental involvement in music education and believes its impact will lend great support, interest, and enthusiasm for the entire district's music program.

Recommendations

The primary recommendation this writer would make is that the implementation activities and resources of this practicum be incorporated and developed for grades one through three. She would like to have the efforts made in the practicum continue in a systematic and organized fashion. Several teachers at these grade levels have offered their assistance in activating this recommendation.

The formation of booklets for the different areas of potential involvement is one that will be expensive and require much time. A budget for these materials and availability of parent volunteers should be confirmed before the beginning of each school year. This particular school district is fortunate in having a school volunteer program director who will appoint one volunteer to this job exclusively. The continued success

of this program will be greatly benefited by the volunteer and, at least for the next school year, partial funding from the school music benefactor. It will be necessary to acquire a commitment from the parent group or other source at the end of each school year for the next school year's funding. The writer feels confident in gaining the needed support. Funding through the school's parent group for resource materials is another recommendation. Most music supply budgets would not be sufficient to cover the expense of materials. While the writer has been fortunate in having contributions made for the purchase of resource material, the continuation of this project will require concrete and ongoing financial support. The parent group at the writer's school has responded positively to this possibility for the next school year.

A final recommendation would be the institution of informational meetings at each grade level for which participants would receive points toward recertification. A proposal for this will be presented to the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. These meetings would serve to reinforce goals, assist in solving any problems encountered, and encouraging grade level teachers in their efforts at incorporating the practicum's goals which would be benefited by their involvement and awareness.

Plans For Dissemination

The results of this practicum have already been shared to a small extent with other music teachers in the district. The reactions were all positive, encouraging, and inquisitive. Discussions with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction offered several suggestions for broadening the range of contact about the practicum's content. One suggestion is the initiation of coffee klatches for parents would would not ordinarily come into the school. Some of these parents contacted at the beginning of the practicum alluded to the fact that school was not a pleasant memory for them and they felt more comfortable in another setting. These parents would be well served by the meetings in homes of other parents with whom they are acquainted.

The assistant superintendent also suggested that the final report be shared in depth with the other district music teachers on an in-service day and/or as a workshop for arts teachers. A copy of the report will be on file at the school district library, thus making it available for teachers to take home.

The Music Educators Journal features a column in each issue where original ideas or solutions are presented. The writer will send a brief version of the practicum along with the writer's personal address to the journal for publication consideration. This journal is the most widely read and distributed music journal in the United States and, therefore,

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the writer considers it to be the best venue for national acknowledgement of her practicum's methods and results.

The writer plans to present the practicum's intent and materials to three nearby school districts in the fall. These contacts were arranged by the school's Glee Club benefactor. The purpose of these presentations will be to show districts how they can tailor the practicum to their district s musical needs. The writer hopes that these initial presentations will provide networking opportunities through which she will gain information and connections for marketing the practicum resources on a more generic basis. This idea was presented to the writer by several people, including musical colleagues, and financial support has been offered.

One of the writer's colleagues teaches elementary special education and has an emotionally handicapped population. She has used the "Songs We Sing" tape and song booklet in the classroom to prepare for parent conferences. She communicated that the students and parents enjoyed singing the songs, and the students especially enjoyed "teaching" or leading their parents through the song. This positive experience made some of the less positive parts of the evening more palatable, and provided the students with a boost to their self-esteem. The writer views this as another possible avenue for dissemination.

An activity for dissemination to all teachers and staff in the writer's school has been planned for May. Invitations will be distributed to all for a "Musical Gathering" at the writer's

home. The practicum will be presented and discussed, abstracts will be distributed, and each person is asked to bring one idea or resource that he or she has used successfully when contacting parents. The writer plans to distribute copies of the final report to school board members and administrators in hopes of achieving board support for the designation of next school year as "Parental Involvement In Music Education."

The writer took a fourth year extension to complete the practicum and during this time she continued the development of materials and resources of involving parents in their child's music education. Her commitment to the purpose of this practicum has been, and will remain strong, throughout her teaching career.

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APPENDIX A

Class Checklist, Survey Tabulations,

Sample Of Answers And Comments

To Questions 4, 5, And 6 On Music Survey

CLASS CHECKLIST FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN MUSIC

		YES	NO
1.	MONTHLY NEWSLETTER		
	JANUARY		
	FEBRUARY		
	MARCH		
	APRIL		
	MAY		
	JUNE		
	JULY		
2.	PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK OF MUSICAL ACTIVITIES		
3.	PAMPHLET DESCRIBING CURRICULUM AND EXPECTATIONS		
4.	AUDIO-CASSETTE FOR HOME USE		
5.	VIDEO		
6.	PARENT-STUDENT DESIGNED PERFORMANCES		

SURVEY TABULATIONS FOR YES/NO QUESTIONS

261 surveys were mailed.
93 surveys were returned.

#1. The parental involvement project at Thorntons Ferry School was helpful to me in understanding the expectations of my child in music. Yes-89 No-4

#2. I would be interested in the further development of this project in primary grades at Thorntons Ferry School. Yes-85 No-7

#7. I believe that parental involvement in a child's music education is important. Yes-93

#8. I would be interested in participating in future developments of the parental participation in music project. Yes-81 No-12

#9. As a result of participating in activities associated with this project, I enjoy music more with my child. Yes-80 No-13

#10. My child has benefited from this project. Yes-90 No-3

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION TABULATION

#3. My child and I (please circle) sang, played the recorder, danced, attended musical concerts or programs, and/or listened to music together, as a result of activities offered in this project.

Sang 87
Played The Recorder. 52
Danced 19
Attended Musical Concerts Or Programs. . 90
Listened To Music Together 91

SAMPLE OF ANSWERS AND COMMENTS TO QUESTIONS
4, 5, AND 6 ON MUSIC SURVEY

Question #4: My favorite musical activity to do with my child is:

* Listen to music together.
* Dance to music
* Sing songs in the car to tapes
* Attend concerts and listen to her practice
* Play recorder together
* Make up new words to familiar songs
* Listen to her sing and watch her dance
* Anything and everything
* Sing and play the piano
* Listen to him play the synthesizer

Question #5 The most interesting activity offered by the project was:

* Singing with the "Songs We Sing" tape
* School concerts
* Visiting the music class
* The opportunity to see my child in musical
* Symphony concert and recorder unit
* Learning to play the recorder
* Introduction to various types of music
* Listening to her practice her band instrument

Question #6 Other activities that should be considered for inclusion are:

* Music lessons involving instrument
* More instrumental instruction
* Square dancing/Victorian style dancing
* Field trips to musical activities
* Basic music theory (notes, timing, etc.)
* Lessons with various instruments
* Form a band for children to play instrument that they already know

COMMENTS

* "I hope that the middle school will do as much as you have for their students. It was greatly appreciated by us both. The program is very important for developing self confidence, especially in children of single parent homes."
* "An excellent program."
* "Education is never just academics-any program that introduces people to something they've never seen, heard, or done is fantastic. As with other areas of education, parental involvement results in greater enjoyment, participation, and learning on the part of the child/student.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter And Parent Involvement Survey

June, 1991

Dear Parents:

It has been my privilege to begin creating ways and means for increasing parental involvement in your child's music education. The attempt has been part of my doctoral program in early and middle childhood education through Nova University. My hope is that this project will have served as a pilot for the School District upon which to expand in the coming years.

I ask for your assistance by taking a few moments of your time to complete the enclosed survey. The results of this survey will be compiled into a report and then disseminated to all interested persons. Please know that your input is highly valued and most important to the success of this project.

An audio-cassette has been recorded for the enjoyment of you and your family and may be picked up at School between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 between July 5 and July 19. The cassette is accompanied by a songsheet and is yours to keep.

I wish you and your family a wonderful and MUSICAL summer!

Musically yours,

Valerie Cowart

Valerie Cowart
Music Teacher

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions:

1. The parental involvement project at School was helpful to me in understanding the expectation of my child in music.

   Yes____ No____

2. I would be interested in the further development of this project in primary grades at School.

   Yes____ No____

3. My child and I (please circle) sang, played the recorder, danced, attended musical concerts or programs, and/or listened to music together as a result of activities offered in this project.

4. My favorite musical activity to do with my child is _____.

5. The most interesting activity offered by the project was _____.

6. Other activities that should be considered for inclusion are _____.

7. I believe that parental involvement in a child's music education is important.

   Yes____ No____

8. I would be interested in participating in future developments of the parental participation in music project.

   Yes____ No____

9. As a result of participating in activities associated with this project, I enjoy music more with my child.

   Yes____ No____

10. My child has benefited from this project.

    Yes____ No____

Please add any comments, suggestions, or questions that you may have on the back. Thank you for your input!

APPENDIX C

List Of Materials Produced

LIST OF MATERIALS PRODUCED

- FIVE FOR FAMILY
- VIEWS FROM PROMINENT AMERICAN CITIZENS
- MUSIC ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILY FUN
- RECORDER HANBOOK FOR FAMILY FUN
- SCHOOL MUSIC RECORDINGS
- JANUARY MUSIC NOTES
- FEBRUARY MUSIC NOTES
- MARCH MUSIC NOTES
- APRIL MUSIC NOTES
- MAY MUSIC NOTES
- JUNE MUSIC NOTES
- JULY MUSIC NOTES
- SONGS WE SING
- PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT SURVEY
- OUR FAVORITE MUSIC
- VIDEO TITLES
- MUSIC BROCHURE
- INFORMATION LETTER TO TEACHERS
- SAMPLE CLASS CHECK-LIST AND SURVEY RESPONSES

* Samples of materials are available from the writer.